

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 8261

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, UR, TH
SUBJECT: VISIT OF SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FIRYUBIN
TO THAILAND

1. SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NIKOLAI FIRYUBIN VISITED BANGKOK MARCH 11-13 DURING WHICH TIME HE CALLED ON THAI FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT. SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO ESTABLISH FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH PRESENT THAI LEADERSHIP. ACCORDING TO SOVIET EMBOFF, MEETING WITH UPPADIT WENT SMOOTHLY; TIME ALLOTTED HAD BEEN 30 MINUTES, BUT THEY ENDED UP TALKING FOR ABOUT AN HOUR AND A HALF. SOURCE SAID THAT PRESS HAD PLACED WRONG EMPHASIS ON FIRYUBIN'S COMMENTS ABOUT ASEAN'S ZOPFN PROPOSAL. (ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY THE NATION REVIEW, FOR EXAMPLE CARRIED HEADLINES MAR 14, "RUSSIA 'EVASIVE' ON ASEAN PEACE ZONE SCHEME -- FIRYUBIN: NO CLEAR ANSWERS".) ALTHOUGH FIRYUBIN HAD NOT COME OUT AND SAID USSR SUPPORTS ASEAN PROPOSAL, HIS RESPONSE HAD NOT BEEN AS NEGATIVE AS PORTRAYED BY PRESS. UPPADIT HAD "PUSHED" FOR DEFINITIVE STATEMENT, AND FIRYUBIN HAD REPLIED THAT THE USSR SUPPORTS PROPOSALS FOR PEACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND SIMILAR PROPOSALS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. FIRYUBIN WENT ON TO THANK THAILAND FOR SUP-
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PORTING USSR ACTIONS FOR PEACE SUCH AS NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION EFFORTS AND VARIOUS U.N. RESOLUTIONS.

2. SOVIET EMBOFF SAID THAT BOTH COUNTRIES HAD AGREED THAT A SETTLEMENT TO THE VIETNAMESE-CAMBODIAN BORDER CONFLICT WAS DESIRABLE. THAILAND WAS NERVOUS ABOUT FIGHTING IN THE REGION, AND THE USSR DESIRED A CEASE-FIRE "SOMETHING

ALONG THE LINES OF THE VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL, ALTHOUGH IT DOESN'T NECESSARILY HAVE TO FOLLOW THEIR EXACT POINTS." SOVIET EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER U.S. THOUGHT PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK WOULD RAISE CAMBODIAN-VIETNAMESE PROBLEM WITH CHINESE DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO PEKING. EMBOFF REPLIED WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT KRIANGSAK INTENDED TO DISCUSS WITH CHINESE. SOVIET NOTED THAT THAI HAD IN PAST ATTEMPTED TO GET CHINESE TO MEDIATE IN THEIR DISPUTE WITH CAMBODIA, AND KRIANGSAK WOULD PROBABLY TRY TO GET CHINA TO USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH CAMBODIA. SOVIET EMBOFF THEN REMARKED THAT THE U.S. MUST BE SITTING BACK OBSERVING THE CONFLICT WITH SOME AMUSEMENT, TO WHICH EMBOFF REPLIED THAT THE PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA AND VIET-NAM HAD SUFFERED QUITE ENOUGH AND THAT THE U.S. FAVORED PEACE IN THE REGION.

3. ASKED WHETHER THE LONG-PENDING THAI-SOVIET CULTURAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED DURING FIRYUBIN'S VISIT, SOVIET EMBOFF REPLIED THAT SUBJECT HAD NOT BEEN BROACHED. AGREEMENT HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED SOME TIME AGO, AND IT WAS NOW A MATTER OF GETTING FINAL APPROVAL FROM HIGH LEVELS OF RTG. SOVIETS DESIRED A FORMAL AGREEMENT, BECAUSE "WE COMMUNISTS ARE BIG ON PLANNING." WITH AN AGREEMENT EVENTS COULD BE PLANNED AND BUDGETED, WHEREAS OCCASIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CULTURAL EVENTS IN THAILAND MADE BY THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN BANGKOK WERE OFTEN MET WITH REFUSAL IN MOSCOW DUE TO LACK OF PRE-ARRANGED FINANCING.
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WHITEHOUSE

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